

**What They Don't Teach in Library School:  
Competencies, Education and Employer Expectations  
for a Career in Cataloging**

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Good morning!

On behalf of Father David M. O'Connell, C.M., President of The Catholic University of America, our 397 fulltime faculty, 420 part-time faculty, 920 staff and over 6,000 students, I want to welcome you to The Catholic University of America and to Washington, D.C.

We are delighted to host this pre-conference on cataloging today. Through this conference you will identify knowledge and skill-sets future catalogers must have to manage digital and analog information resources effectively and efficiently. You will also discuss what educators and trainers can do to help students obtain such competencies, what employers expect of new catalogers, and what strategies will be effective in recruiting the best and the brightest to the cataloging profession.

It is most fitting that this pre-conference takes place at Catholic because our institutional mission commits this academic community to "excellence in teaching and research, all in the service to the nation and the Church." Professional education is a major part of our effort. In fact, of the 12 schools here at Catholic, half of them are involved in professional education. The School of Library and Information Science focuses on educating information professionals and preparing leaders "who will address professional values and societal issues, especially those related to information and knowledge." Library science courses have been offered on this campus since 1930, and a full Department of Library Science was organized 70 years ago, in 1937. One of the best ways to advance knowledge is to discuss and debate ideas, and in professional education it is critical that we collaborate with practitioners. This rationale justified the founding of a department 70 years ago, and it remains valid today. So we are pleased to host this event for practitioners, educators, trainers, employers, and students to interact and brainstorm ideas.

Our liberal arts and sciences general education curriculum, shared among all of our undergraduate students who comprise half of Catholic's total enrollment, aims to prepare our students for a world of work that is continually changing and certainly uncertain. From our perspective of 2007, based upon our own experience with an explosion of technologically-driven information over the last 25 years, we can anticipate that our students will enter careers characterized by changes in jobs and occupational trajectories over the course of their work-life. Yet, those changes through new and emerging careers are unpredictable, and so are the prerequisite knowledge bases and skills that students need to navigate those changes throughout their lives.

How, then, can any university prepare students for that world of work? Our answer here at The Catholic University relies on the fundamentals that have existed since Plato had his Socrates walk the streets of the Republic teaching the good life of beauty, truth, and goodness. That is, we want our undergraduate students to leave this educational community:

- Thinking creatively and critically,
- Able to solve problems independently and on teams,
- Proficient in writing and speaking clearly and effectively,
- Able to think and act honestly from their own values anchors,
- And, able to navigate the complexity of our multicultural society -- to derive the enrichments of those cultural and linguistic differences.

If our students are successful, they will know themselves at the end of the process. And, this objective takes me back to this conference. This world of change, particularly in its digital expression poses challenges for the field of library and information sciences. The rapid increase of digital resources intensifies the pressure to organize information quickly and effectively. Users are pressed for time and prefer direct search solutions like Google to complex search tools. They are also interested more in search results rather than the search process. There are many Web search tools competing for users' attention, and libraries face stiff competition.

The digital age also offers great opportunities because the need for information organization is more important and urgent than ever before. The field of library and information sciences as a profession offers the forum to turn a challenge into an advantage of new opportunities. The cataloging field has proven principles and established practices for managing information. Library and information professionals are known for their user-orientation. I believe collaboration between educators and practitioners will result in better preparation of the next generation of information managers and, consequently, of consumers of information, so central to any university.

I wish you great success in today's conference.

Welcome again to The Catholic University of America.